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BOOK REVIEWS

The Limits of Washington Power

EUGENE J. McCARTHY. **The Limits of Power. America's Role in the World.**
Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1967.

ON THE cover of this book by one of the present contenders for the United States Presidency figures the familiar American eagle but with a clamp on the beak. It symbolizes the author's basic idea. "If this book has a principal theme," Senator McCarthy writes in the preface, "it is that our foreign policy should be more restrained and ... more closely in keeping with the movement of history."

The gist of the Senator's practical recommendations to this end is as follows. First, that the United States should be more ready than in the past to show, through international or multinational agencies, "respect for the opinions of mankind." Second, that the Central Intelligence Agency and the military should be more carefully controlled. Third, that the Senate, principally through the Foreign Relations Committee, should more competently and effectively exercise its constitutional responsibility in the formulation and conduct of foreign policy.

As we see, Mr. McCarthy's demands are very modest. But even they suffice to bring him into conflict with the present official line.

The hitherto little-known Minnesota Senator plunged into the thick of the Presidential contest on a platform reflecting the popular discontent with the Vietnam adventure and the Johnson Administration's domestic record. The decision took not only political intuition and acumen but a certain amount of civic courage. After all, McCarthy was not the only Democrat who wanted to enter the race. But nobody else would take the risk until the New Hampshire primaries in March produced an impressive success for McCarthy, against the "realistic" predictions of those who called him a quixotic crank.

Son of a Minnesota farmer of Irish descent, Eugene McCarthy was a member of the House of Representatives from 1948 to 1958, and for the past ten years he has sat in the Senate. The long years in Congress and experience on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee have given him an inside knowledge of U.S. policy-making. In the late fifties he was a political ally of Lyndon Johnson, at that time Senate majority leader. It was Johnson who helped him to a seat on the Senate's influential Finance Committee.

In 1964 McCarthy was counted a probable Johnson choice for the Vice-Presidential nomination, but in the end Johnson picked Hubert Humphrey. Johnson-McCarthy relations, never too close, began to cool in 1965 when McCarthy condemned the sending of U.S. marines to the Dominican Republic. He was one of the 16 Senators who objected to resumption of the bombing of North Vietnam after the brief pause in January 1966, and his consistent opposition to the military intervention in Vietnam led to a complete break with the White House.

In his book Mr. McCarthy emphasizes that the U.S. cannot be the world's policeman and should realistically limit the range of its interests and commitments. "America's contribution to world civilization," he writes, "must be more than a continuous performance demonstration that we can police the planet."

U.S. military intervention in Dominican affairs, the Senator points out, revived all the Latin-American fears and misgivings born of the long era of "gunboat diplomacy" and the "big stick." It ran counter to declared U.S. policy and the obligations assumed in 1948 under Article 15 of the Charter of the Organization of American States, whereby "no state or group of states has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other state."

The scheme for an "inter-American force" to continue such interventionist policies is a non-starter, Mr. McCarthy considers. "This idea," he writes, "has been largely unacceptable to the